

The Wren Box
304 Williams
Bel Air
Private

If any house in Bel Air deserves the adjective "charming", it is the Wren Box. This colonial revival house is not small, but it looks petite despite the fact that it is built of stone. The gable roof slopes down to form the porch roof, carried on fluted doric columns. Fluted columns are rare in Town. The sun porch on the south side nicely balances the mass of the front porch and the deck railing provides a contrast to the rough stone mass. Cottage features in the house include a dutch front door, the tiny hexagonal bay on the rear, the gable hood supported on strong curved brackets over the north back door, and the plank shutters with diamond cut outs. The interior is equally charming and quite roomy. The fireplace in the living room has a classical wooden mantel matched by the one in the master bedroom upstairs. The sun porch has a large stone fireplace back to back with the living room one.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAMEHISTORIC
The Wren Box
AND/OR COMMON**2 LOCATION**STREET & NUMBER
304 Williams

1st

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Bel Air

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER rental

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Jean Graybeal

Telephone #: 838-6040

STREET & NUMBER

501 W. Gordon Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21014

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: 927

Folio #: 65

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

NA-1502

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This one and a half story, three bay, stone rubble house is at 304 Williams Street in the Town of Bel Air, Harford County, Maryland. The rough stone quoins and flat arches that top windows and doors sharply delineate the little house. From the front (east) the slate roof slopes down to form the top of the front porch, which is carried on fluted doric posts. A large shed-roofed double dormer breaks the roof slope in the middle. It has a pair of 1/1 windows. The entrance is in the middle bay of the front elevation, a Dutch door.

The south elevation has a large plain outside end chimney. The bottom half of the chimney is obscured by a rectangular sunporch of tongue and groove with a second story deck of square balusters and larger square posts. On the second story the chimney stack is flanked by a door (west) and a window (east), each having plank cottage shutters with a diamond cut out in the top. A pair of ventilators flanks the chimney in the gable.

The back (west) elevation of the house is the most complex. Three casement windows march across the second story. The first story has a tiny wooden hexagonal bay window flanked by doors. The south door is set deeply and is flanked by shutters matching those in the second story gable end. The north door is topped by a gable-roofed hood on graceful solid brackets. North of that is the frame gable-roofed dog house Bel Air uses to hide its basement doors.

The interior of the house is charming. There are three rooms and a bath on the first floor: north living room, and south dining room with kitchen and powder room behind. A little passageway (lighted by the bay window) connects kitchen and living room under the staircase.

The staircase is partially enclosed in the north wall of the living room. It has a square newel and a few square balusters. The living room fireplace has a classical mantel of square engaged colonettes on blocks leading to panels which support the shelf. A matching panel is in the center of the frieze. Cupboards in the sides of the chimney breast and built in bookcases complete the treatment. There is a square opening between living room and dining room with folding wooden doors.

The door between the dining room and the kitchen has a round head with fan tracery over 9 panes of glass over 4 panels. A similar door in the north half of the same (west) wall leads to a cupboard. It formerly also lead to the kitchen but was blocked up when that part of the kitchen was enclosed to make the powder room.

All woodwork is plain. The windows are set flush with the outside wall plane and are lined with panelled woodwork.

The tongue and groove sunporch reveals a massive fireplace back to back with the living room one.

The second story has three bedrooms, a bath, and a small chamber over a portion of the kitchen which now has wooden access steps to the trap door to the attic. This was the apartment kitchen. The master bedroom (south west chamber) has a fireplace at an angle in the southeast corner. The mantel duplicates the one in the living room. There are two cupboards in the overmantel.

The southeast bedroom has built in cupboard and drawers in the east wall. The drawers take advantage of what would otherwise be wasted space in the area over the front porch.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1914 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This neo-classical cottage, at once elegant and cozy, is unique in Bel Air for its combination of style and its stone building material. The other stone neo-classical building from this period, the Evans, Greer House (210 Hall Street) is haughty in comparison with this little house. Bel Air's houses once all had fences. That of the Wren Box is nearly the only one left.

According to the present owner, Mrs. Jean Graybeal, Miss Josephine Amos lived at Lake Fanny, and, after her house there burned, she bought this lot, had the stone hauled up from Lake Fanny, and built this house. It is possible. There are a lot of Amoses around that part of the county. At any rate, she bought this lot in Richardson's Addition from the Richardson heirs in 1914 (195/173) and built the house. She sold it in 1942 to Walter B. Young (273/115). This house makes a habit of being sold in the first year of a World War. After her husband's death, Mrs. Young sold the little house to Jean Graybeal who lives just down the street on the Kelly grounds.

The house had a second story apartment when Mrs. Graybeal bought it.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property occupies parcel #455 in the Town of Bel Air.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marilynn Larew, Architectural Historian

8 December 1979

ORGANIZATION

Town of Bel Air

DATE

838-8700

STREET & NUMBER

39 Hickory Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

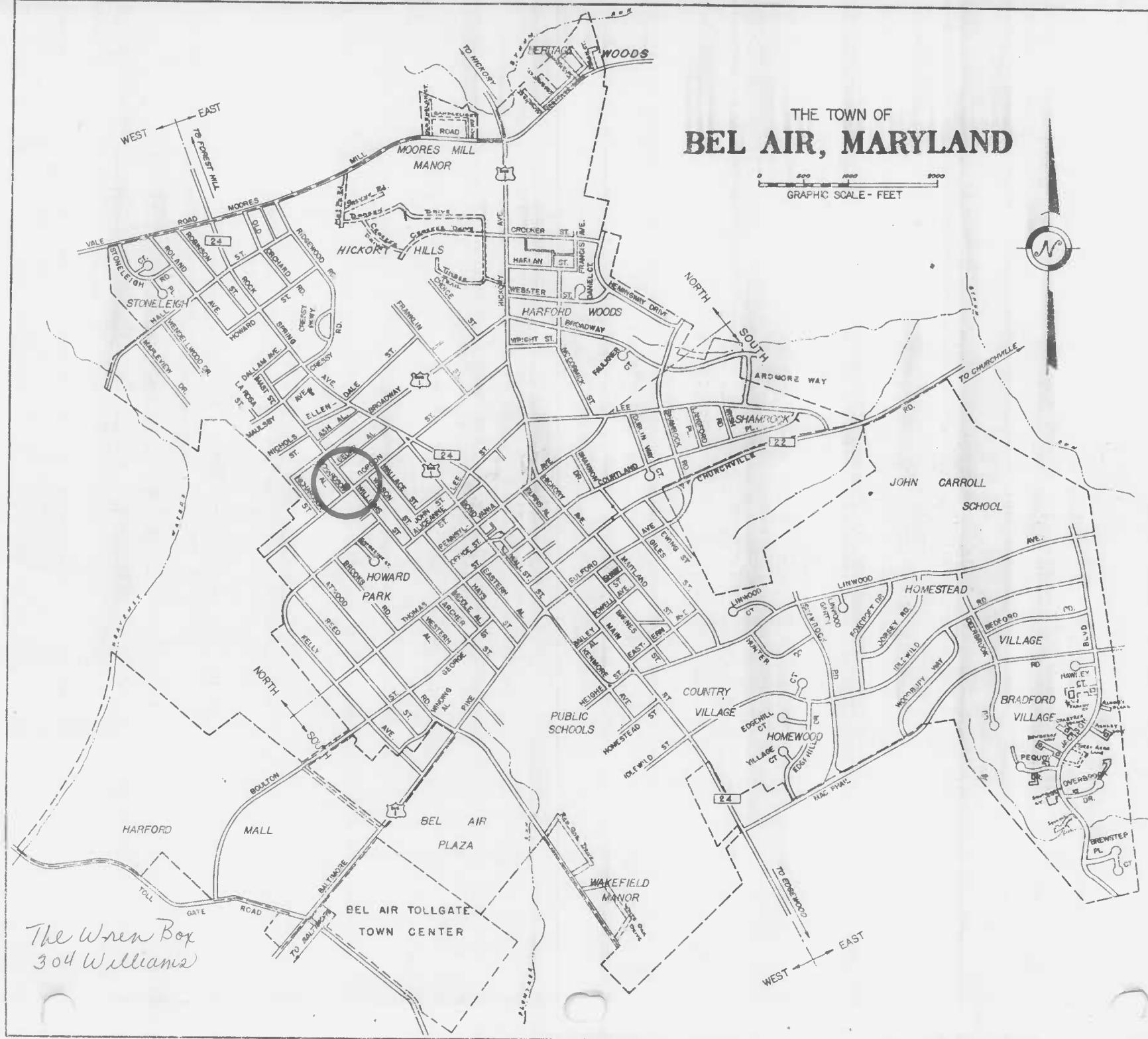
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

THE TOWN OF BEL AIR, MARYLAND

0 500 1000 2000
GRAPHIC SCALE - FEET



H A-1502
The Wren Box
304 Williams





